

New Hampshire Revolutionary War Itinerary

With a motto like “Live Free or Die,” you know New Hampshire meant business when it came to their independence. From the Battle at Fort William and Mary to becoming the first state to declare its independence, lots of crucial events in Revolutionary history took place here on New Hampshire soil. These historic events are preserved very well on numerous sites throughout the state, and are there for everyone to visit and learn about the times.

Day One

Start off your Colonial tour on the Seacoast at Fort Constitution in New Castle, the former site of Fort William and Mary. This is a great place to begin your tour as it is well known as being the site of the first aggressive acts of the Revolutionary War. It was here where General John Langdon got word of advancing British troops, and led a mob of American Colonists to take over the British held Fort of William and Mary. This was significant not only because it was the first aggressive acts of the Revolution, it was also the first American seizure of a British fort.

Furthering down the Seacoast, the next place you should venture to is the city of Portsmouth. Known then as being the Colonial Capitol, there is an abundance of history around this community. Some of the most notable sites include the Strawberry Banke museum, the Isles of Shoals and the Black History Trail. The Strawberry Banke museum, through its restored colonial homes and interpretive programs, offers authentic insight as to what life would have been like back in the 1700’s. The Isles of Shoals, known as being a large fishing port in colonial times, was evacuated at the start of the war and is best viewed aboard one of the narrated Isles of Shoals Steamship Company ships. The Black Heritage Trail, recognized to honor the contribution of African American slaves, showcases some 24 historic stops, which are all accessible on foot.

To end the day, check yourself into one of Portsmouth’s many lodging properties, such as the Sise Inn or the Sheraton Harborside, and enjoy dinner at one of Portsmouth’s local restaurants. Dining hotspots such as the Portsmouth Brewery, the Gaslight Company, and Ri Ra Irish Pub & Restaurant all offer delicious food as well as live entertainment on the weekends.

Day Two

Heading west for the second day, the next stop on your list should be the American Independence Museum in Exeter. It was here in 1985 where a Dunlap Broadside of the Declaration of Independence was found in the Ladd-Gilman House, which is now included as one of the museums exhibited houses. This amazing discovery is a major focus of the museum’s collections and programming. Other museum collections include two rare drafts of the U.S. Constitution, as well as an original Purple Heart, awarded by George Washington to soldiers demonstrating extraordinary bravery.

Further west be sure to stop by John Stark Park and the John Stark scenic byway. John Stark was one of NH’s greatest leaders in the Revolutionary War having crucial roles at the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Battle of Bennington. The state’s motto, “Live Free or Die,” was taken from John Stark’s toast to the 32nd reunion of the Battle of

Bennington. At John Stark Park and Scenic Byway you will pass his memorial statue, the Molly Stark House, and the Stark Cannon as well as numerous other sites.

The final stop on the tour is the birthplace of Daniel Webster in Franklin. This small farmhouse was the home to Daniel in his childhood years before he moved to attend college at Dartmouth, and eventually serve in Congress. This site has become a historical landmark of the state and gives great insight into what life was like back in the 1700's.

If you have extra time, other notable stops in NH include the Fort at No. 4 in Charlestown, a military base where John Stark stayed before venturing to the battle at Bennington, the Fort Stark Historical Site in New Castle which was built to protect the Portsmouth Harbor, and the American Independence Byway which is a 21-mile route displaying some of the seacoast's oldest settlements.

